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Theoretical-empirical Article

Open Government in São Paulo: An Analysis of Open Public Policies

Governo Aberto na Cidade de São Paulo: Uma Análise de Políticas Públicas Abertas

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ABSTRACT

Objective: to identify how and when the open government principles, specifically transparency, participation, and collaboration, are being incorporated into the public policy cycle phases in local governments. **Theoretical framework:** theories related to public policy analysis and open government. **Method:** a single case study with an incorporated focus on the open government initiative of the São Paulo City Hall, where three distinct public policies were analyzed from a theoretical-analytical framework built by integrating the approach of the public policy cycle with the three open government principles. **Results:** the study showed that in none of the analyzed policies there was the full incorporation of these principles in the five phases of the policy cycle and that little progress was made regarding the requirements for them to be considered open policies. **Conclusions:** the study contributes to narrowing the theoretical-methodological gap concerning the effectiveness of open government initiatives. The method offers conditions to be applied in different realities and can be used in future research to better understand how open government principles are being incorporated into public policies of governments that have signed open government commitments.

Keywords: open government; public policy; transparency; participation; collaboration.

RESUMO

Objetivo: identificar quando e como os princípios de governo aberto, especificamente transparência, participação e colaboração, estão sendo incorporados nas fases do ciclo de políticas públicas em governos locais. **Marco teórico:** teorias relacionadas à análise de políticas públicas e governo aberto. **Método:** estudo de caso único com enfoque incorporado sobre a iniciativa de governo aberto da Prefeitura Municipal de São Paulo, em que foram analisadas três políticas públicas distintas a partir de um esquema teórico-analítico construído mediante a integração da abordagem do ciclo de políticas públicas com os três princípios de governo aberto. **Resultados:** o estudo evidenciou que em nenhuma das políticas analisadas houve a plena incorporação desses princípios nas cinco fases do ciclo político e que pouco se avançou quanto aos requisitos necessários para que elas possam ser consideradas políticas abertas. **Conclusões:** o estudo contribui para estreitar a lacuna teórico-metodológica em relação à efetividade de iniciativas de governo aberto. O método oferece condições de ser aplicado em diferentes realidades e pode ser utilizado em pesquisas futuras para melhor compreender como os princípios de governo aberto estão sendo incorporados nas políticas públicas de governos que firmaram compromissos de governo aberto.

Palavras-chave: governo aberto; políticas públicas; transparência; participação; colaboração.

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INTRODUCTION

The term 'open government' can be considered a modern method of governance that provides a new space for openness and interaction between governments and citizens based on the principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration (Cruz-Rubio, 2015; Ramírez-Alujas, 2012; Veljković, Bogdanović-Dinić, & Stoimenov, 2014).

Although these principles are not new concepts, scholars in the open government field have remained relatively silent regarding the dilemma of their incorporation into the production of open public policies (Brunswicker, Almirall, & Lee, 2018). From the same angle, other authors draw attention to the lack of guidelines and procedures to analyze the effectiveness of open government initiatives, as well as the influence of their principles on the public policy cycle (Harrison & Sayogo, 2014; Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2016). Consequently, few empirical studies have been conducted to assess the progress of open government initiatives. According to Kornberger, Meyer, Brandtner and Höllerer (2017), "exist only a few empirical studies of open government" and "most research rests either on anecdotal evidence or on mere assumptions" (Kornberger, Meyer, Brandtner, & Höllerer, 2017, p. 184). Cruz-Rubio and Ramírez-Alujas (2012) believe that, although the objective of open government initiatives is to substantially impact the public policy cycle, making it more transparent, participatory, and collaborative, this reality has not been accompanied by interpretation and analysis efforts, especially in local governments, which are the instances closest to citizens. In the same vein, Piotrowski (2017) believes that more research should be carried out to identify whether open government initiatives are being effective, that is, whether or not the promise of openness is greater than its real impact. Therefore, there is a need for research that seeks methods of analysis that contribute to the understanding of open government initiatives and verify their effectiveness (Tai, 2021; Wirtz, Weyerer, & Rösch, 2018).

From this perspective, this study aims to identify how and when the transparency, participation, and collaboration principles are being incorporated into the public policy cycle phases in local governments that have signed open government commitments. For this purpose, a case study was carried out on the open government initiative of São Paulo City Hall, where three distinct public policies were analyzed from a theoretical-analytical framework built by integrating the public policy cycle approach with the principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration.

PUBLIC POLICY ANALYSIS IN THE OPEN GOVERNMENT CONTEXT

The idea of open government has been discussed in the literature as a way to improve government management and the development of public policies, reinforcing the participatory and deliberative aspects of democracy (Burall, Hughes, & Stilgoe, 2013; Veljković et al., 2014; Wirtz et al., 2018). According to Bueno, Brelàz and Salinas (2016), "open government goes beyond specific and unrelated practices to promote a broad public policy, which encompasses cities in their relationship with their citizens" (Bueno, Brelàz, & Salinas, 2016, p. 11).

For Ramírez-Alujas (2012) and Wirtz and Birkmeyer (2015), open government is considered a governance model focused on the inclusion of citizens and other non-governmental actors at all stages of the public policy cycle and decision-making arenas, based on three principles: (a) **transparency**: means that the public must have easy and unrestricted access to information about public policies, decisions, activities, and the performance of government and public administration, enabling the exercise of social control, the realization of accountability, and the guarantee of public integrity; (b) **citizen participation**: consists of the redistribution of power through the inclusion of citizens in the public policy cycle phases and decision-making processes to promote the strengthening of citizenship, deliberative democracy, and the legitimacy of decisions; and (c) **collaboration**: can be defined as the joint work between different governmental and non-governmental actors to create and conduct public policies aimed at co-producing public goods and services, generating open innovation, and increasing public value.

These principles are not new concepts, as each of them has been discussed for several decades in the literature. However, only in the last decade have they been grouped under the same umbrella, denominated open government. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that transparency, participation, and collaboration taken in isolation do not define open government.

According to Cruz-Rubio and Ramírez-Alujas (2012) and Cruz-Rubio (2015), public policies developed under these three principles can be defined in two different ways: public policies for the open government or open public policies. While public policies for the open government have the purpose of creating mechanisms (means) of transparency, participation, and collaboration, open public policies are born and developed under these principles (ends) (Cruz-Rubio & Ramírez-Alujas, 2012). This study focuses on the analysis of open public policies, that is, those whose policy cycle (agenda-setting, formulation, decision-

making, implementation, and evaluation) is permeated by the open government principles, as illustrated in Figure 1.

Public policy analysis draws on general theoretical contributions from political science and disciplines such as economics, sociology, and public administration. Its object of study is government programs, actions, and decisions, especially concerning the genesis of the problems that such decisions seek to solve, how solutions are formulated, and the conditions of their implementation (Araújo & Rodrigues, 2017). According to Howlett, Ramesh and Perl (2013), public policy analysis necessarily includes consideration of the governmental and societal actors involved in these decision-making processes and their ability to influence and act. For Araújo and Rodrigues (2017), the objective is not to explain the functioning of the political system, but to clarify the logic of public action, the continuities and interruptions in public policy, the rules of its operation, or the role and nature of the interaction of actors and institutions in political processes.

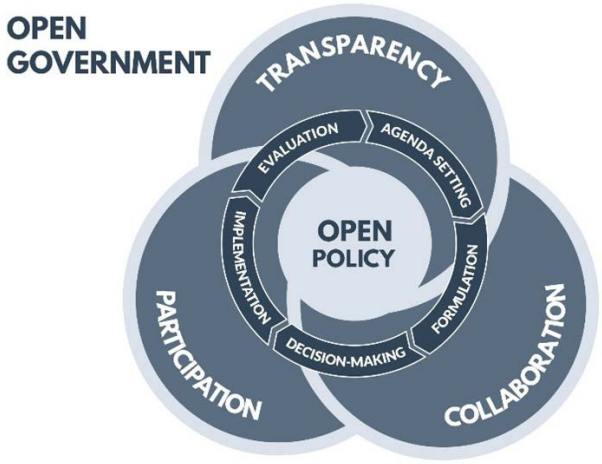

Figure 1. Open public policy cycle.
Source: Own elaboration.

Conforming to Dye (2013), public policy analysis aims to answer questions related to the description, causes, and consequences of public policies. First, it is possible to answer 'what,' 'how,' and/or 'when' the government is doing (or not doing) in the areas of social assistance, defense, education, civil rights, health, environment, taxation, etc. Second, it is possible to examine the 'why' of government action (or inaction), that is, the causes or determinants of public policy. Finally, it is possible to determine 'what difference does it make' or rather, the consequences or effects of public policy. Several authors have searched for answers to these questions through different forms of public policy analysis.

The analysis of open public policies essentially refers to the level at which transparency, citizen participation, and collaboration are incorporated into the phases of the political-administrative process. Openness is not simply about doing things more transparently and releasing numerous government data sets, as it is necessary to incorporate the ideas, knowledge, and experiences of citizens and other non-governmental actors into the public policy cycle (Burall et al., 2013). This does not mean that each of the actors involved must be active in public policy at all times, but that effective mechanisms must be in place for them to engage in the processes and have their interests considered in decisions (Tisenkopfs, Kalniņß, & Rieba, 2001). However, as Cruz-Rubio and Ramírez-Alujas (2012), point out, a government that has signed open government commitments does not always create the necessary mechanisms for the development of open public policies. Table 1 shows that there are four possible situations in this case.

As can be observed, the incorporation of open government principles into public policies can occur in multiple situations. For this reason, the analysis of open public policies cannot be one-dimensional, linear, and based on simple routines, but must be multifaceted, varied, and pluralistic (Enserink, Koppenjan, & Mayer, 2013).

Table 1. Possible situations for the application of open government principles in the policy cycle.

	Restricted public policy	Open public policy
Restricted government	These are governments that are not committed to open government principles and where public policy decisions are restricted to government actors.	Specific public policies that have achieved a significant level of transparency and citizen participation, from agenda-setting to evaluation, and that coexist with other restricted public policies in a government that has not committed to open government principles.
Open government	It refers to governments that have signed commitments to put the open government principles into practice, either through their initiatives or through partnerships with other governments, but which restrict decision-making and the development of public policies to government actors.	It corresponds to governments that have signed open government commitments and put into practice the principles of transparency, participation, and collaboration in the development of public policies.

Note. Source: Based on Cruz-Rubio e Ramírez-Alujas (2012).

In the same sense, Mayer, van Daalen and Bots (2013) believe that the multifaceted nature of policies makes it clear that there is no single (let alone 'one best') model for conducting policy analysis, as there are many different approaches and methods. For example, while the public policy cycle assists analysis by dividing the policy process into a series of distinct phases, the situations and scenarios presented by Cruz-Rubio and Ramírez-Alujas (2012) contribute to the analysis of public policies created under the open government principles. In this logic, the public policy cycle alone is incapable of describing the complexity of the interaction between the actors (Howlett, Ramesh, & Perl, 2013). Therefore, it is necessary to seek new forms of analysis or even a combination of methods that can contribute to the understanding of the incorporation of open government principles into the public policy cycle.

Therefore, in this study, a theoretical-analytical scheme is proposed based on categories and subcategories of analysis related to the principles of transparency (Table 2), participation (Table 3), and collaboration (Table 4), which must be coupled with the public policy cycle.

Table 2. Transparency: Categories and subcategories for policy analysis.

Categories	Subcategories		Authors
Types of transparency	*Direct*	*The information is directly observable by the public.*	Figueiredo and Gazoni (2016); Fox (2007); Heald (2003, 2012; Hood (2007); Vaughn (2014); Zuccolotto, Teixeira and Riccio (2015)
	Indirect	*The information is visible and verifiable only by agents or technical specialists.*	
	Active	*Voluntary publication by organizations of the maximum amount of information of general interest.*	
	Passive	*Grant access to non-secret information and documents to any citizen who requests it.*	
	Nominal	*Publishing large data sets without worrying about their comprehensibility.*	
	Effective	*Society can access, understand, and use information.*	
	Real-time	*The information is released as soon as it is created and is disseminated on an ongoing basis.*	
	Retrospect	*The information is made available ex-post, after a period required for publication.*	
Nature	*Normative*	*It establishes the citizen's right to know and the government's duty to be transparent.*	Dror (1999); Fisher (2014); Heald (2006)
	Instrumental	*It seeks to prevent corruption and improve the functioning of government by forcing it to be more careful.*	
Perspectives	*Transparency must include institutional, policy, fiscal, operational, and procedural perspectives.*		Ball (2009); Cucciniello, Porumbescu and Grimmelikhuijsen (2017); Heald (2003)
Determinants	*Publicity, comprehensibility, and usefulness of the information*		Michener and Bersch (2013); Platt Neto, Cruz, Ensslin and Ensslin (2007)
Mechanisms	*Access to information*	*It refers to the accessibility, quantity, quality, scope, relevance, and reliability of government information.*	Attard, Orlandi, Scerri and Auer (2015); Cucciniello et al. (2017); Heald (2006); Veljković et al. (2014)
	Open data	*Complete, primary, timely, accessible, machine-processable, non-discriminatory, non-proprietary, and license-free data.*	
Implications	*Social control, accountability, and public integrity.*		Fox (2007); Huberts (2018); Serra and Carneiro (2012)

Note. Source: Own elaboration.

Table 3. Participation: Categories and subcategories for policy analysis.

Categories	Subcategories		Authors
Types of participation	*Direct*	*Citizens can interact directly with the government, and influence the course of policy.*	Avritzer (2012); Bordenave (1986); Richardson (1983)
	Indirect	*Citizen participation takes place through systems of representation, without direct interaction with the government.*	
	Active	*It is one in which the citizen engages, takes part, and acts in the face of reality.*	
	Passive	*Citizens are inert; they make part, but they do not take part.*	
	Real	*Citizens effectively influence political actions and decisions.*	
	Symbolic	*Citizens have minimal influence over actions and decisions but are kept under the illusion that they wield power.*	
Determinants	*Representativeness, independence, information, capacity, involvement, influence, frequency, and permanence.*		Hassenforder, Smajgl and Ward (2015); Rowe and Frewer (2000)
Mechanisms	*Public hearings, management councils, deliberative consultations, advisory committees, public forums, or digital platforms for citizen participation.*		Orr (2013); Rowe and Frewer (2000)
Participation levels	*Information, consultation, recommendation, co-participation, delegation, empowerment.*		Arnstein (1969); Bordenave (1986); Bruns (2003)
Implications	*Strengthening citizenship, deliberative democracy, and legitimacy.*		Chang and Jacobson (2010); Häikiö (2012); Rowe and Frewer (2000)

Note. Source: Own elaboration.

Table 4. Collaboration: Categories and subcategories for policy analysis.

Categories	Subcategories		Authors
Types of collaboration	*Public-private, public-citizen, public-voluntary, intragovernmental, intergovernmental, and multilateral.*		Batley and Rose (2011); Sullivan and Skelcher (2002)
Modes	*Cost-related*	*Self-interested actors aim to reduce their operating and transaction costs.*	Aubouin and Capdevila (2019); Sullivan and Skelcher (2002)
	Resource-based	*Actors actively engage in collaborative practices to learn or complement their resources, incorporating external resources and knowledge sources.*	
	Relational	*Collaborative practices focus primarily on finding a synergistic effect of collaboration. The outcomes of collaboration must be greater than the sum of the interests of the actors involved in the collaboration activities.*	
Determinants	*Capacity for joint action, leadership, and sharing of knowledge, resources, and responsibilities.*		Emerson and Nabatchi (2015); Sullivan and Skelcher (2002); Thomson and Perry (2006)
Mechanisms	*Partnerships, contracts, agreements, consortia, collaboration networks, etc., as long as there is joint work.*		Di Pietro (2019); Forrer, Kee and Boyer (2014); Sullivan and Skelcher (2002)
Collaboration levels	*Isolation, cooperation, coordination, interagency collaboration, integration.*		Selden, Sowa and Sandfort (2006); Thompson and Sanders (1998)
Implications	*Better outcomes in the production of public goods and services, open social innovation, and public value.*		Chalmers (2013); Emerson and Nabatchi (2015); Navarro and Mendoza (2013)

Note. Source: Own elaboration.

The characteristics inherent in each dimension, category, and subcategory of the analysis will be discussed throughout the presentation of the study results.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This is a theoretical-empirical research that can be classified as applied, descriptive, and qualitative. It is an embedded single-case study, that is, a case study in which the situation is evaluated from different units of analysis (Martins, 2008). According to Yin (2001), a case study is adequate for describing a phenomenon, developing a theory, and testing theoretical concepts, thus contributing to the understanding of the individual, organizational, social, and political phenomena.

Object of analysis

The case analyzed in this study was the open government initiative of São Paulo City Hall, introduced by Municipal Decree No. 54,794, signed on January 28, 2014, by then-Mayor Fernando Haddad (2013-2016, Workers' Party). In April 2016, São Paulo joined 14 other subnational governments from around the world as the only Brazilian municipality selected to participate in the pilot phase of the OGP Local Program, a program for local governments launched by the Open Government Partnership (OGP). In addition, São Paulo was recognized by important international agencies, such as the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (IOPD), for the actions taken to strengthen the open government agenda in the municipality. Therefore, the open government initiative of São Paulo can be considered a relevant *locus* for the proposed case study. For more on the history and main milestones of this initiative, see Vidigal (2016) and Brelàz, Crantschaninov and Bellix (2021).

Units of analysis

The selection of the units of analysis was based on a consultation with the Mapping of Open Government Initiatives (SAGA, 2019), a survey report conducted by the Supervision for Open Government Affairs among the municipal secretariats, sub-prefectures, and public companies of São Paulo to identifying projects, programs, and policies developed by them that already incorporate open government principles. As criteria for selection, the units of analysis should be public policies that incorporate the principles of participation and/or collaboration, in addition to transparency. This is because, for a public policy to be considered open, it must at least incorporate transparency and citizen participation in the phases of the policy cycle, just like the collaboration, provided it can bring benefits to the public interest. Furthermore, policies should be linked to different municipal secretariats or entities and be as distinct as possible in terms of the target audience.

Based on these criteria, three different public policies were selected: *Laboratório de Inovação Aberta* (Open Innovation Lab), *Plano Municipal pela Primeira Infância* (Municipal Plan for Early Childhood), and *Programa Operações Urbanas* (Urban Operations Program).

The Open Innovation Lab (MobiLab+), formerly called Urban Mobility Innovation Lab (MobiLab), was created in 2014 under Fernando Haddad's government, with the initial scope of seeking solutions to issues related to urban mobility in the city of São Paulo. From there, the municipal government decided to open up mobility data, promoted hackathons, and partnered with startups and developers, resulting in dozens of applications that provide real-time information about transportation and traffic in São Paulo. This was a pioneering initiative in Latin America in terms of joint work between the public sector and startups in the development of solutions based on open data on urban mobility. This brought it recognition and some national and international awards, despite the mishaps in terms of autonomy, budget, political instability, and difficulties in mobilizing actors and resources, as reported in the study by Swiatek (2019). In June 2019, MobiLab changed its focus and expanded its scope to open innovation, adopted the acronym MobiLab+, and started to have three axes of action: activating the innovation ecosystem by mobilizing different actors, open innovation to co-create solutions with partners inside and outside the public sector, and contribute to the opening of public data with the aim of public innovation.

The Municipal Plan for Early Childhood was instituted in São Paulo by the Municipal Decree No. 58,814/2018 under Bruno Covas' government (2018-2020, Brazilian Social Democracy Party) aiming to establish a series of goals and strategies to promote the development of children aged 0 to 6 years old. The plan was developed in partnership with several municipal secretariats, the São Paulo City Council, and civil society organizations. The policy has four strategic axes: to guarantee the conditions for the intersectoral articulation of programs, projects, and actions for comprehensive early childhood care; guarantee education to all children in early childhood, care, and stimulation that contribute to their integral development; guarantee protection and provide conditions for the exercise of rights and citizenship in early childhood; and guarantee the right to life, health, and good nutrition for pregnant women and children in early childhood.

The Urban Operations Program of São Paulo City Hall is a public policy of an urbanistic nature conducted

by SP Urbanismo, a public company linked to the Municipal Secretariat of Urban Development, which aims at the requalification of urban areas through partnerships between the public and private sectors. The objective of urban operations is to raise funds and carry out structural urban transformations in specific urban spaces. The funds come from granting an increase in the coefficient of use or modification of properties to private owners in exchange for a counterpart, which may be financial or the creation of public spaces of social interest. Currently, São Paulo has four existing urban operations, three of which are consortium members (Água Branca, Água Espraiada, and Faria Lima) and one non-consortium (Centro).

Data collection

For this study, primary and secondary data were collected. Primary data were obtained through semi-structured interviews conducted between October 16 and December 18, 2019. A total of 23 key actors involved in the creation and development of the three selected public policies were interviewed, as well as open government specialists who worked with the Supervision for Open Government Affairs (SAGA), the Open Government Intersecretarial Committee (CIGA-SP), and the Shared Management Forum of the *São Paulo Aberta* initiative (government, civil society organizations, private sector). The decision to interview specialists in open government, in addition to actors who acted directly in the selected policies, is based on the fact that this type of interview allows for a broader understanding of concepts and practices since, in the interview with specialists, the focus is on the interviewee's knowledge of the researched topic, and not on the individual himself (Meuser & Nagel, 2009). According to Creswell (2007), the idea behind this type of qualitative research is to purposefully select the most suitable participants to help the researcher better understand the problem and fulfill the research objectives.

The secondary data used in the research corresponds to institutional records, minutes, notices, norms, and official documents published by the São Paulo City Government related to the three selected public policies and the open government initiative.

Data analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the content analysis technique. According to Bardin (2011), content analysis is based on a set of analysis techniques that aim to extract meaning from communications through systematic and objective procedures for describing the content. As Chizzotti (2006) explains, for content analysis to be applied, the data must be gathered around categories, that is, around a concept or attribute, with a degree of generality that gives unity to a grouping of words or a field of knowledge, according to which the content is classified, ordered, or qualified. For the author, the categories of analysis must be clearly defined and relevant to the intended objectives of the research, seeking to identify the consistency of these units to make inferences and extract meanings. The list of analysis categories and subcategories used in this study is presented in Tables 2, 3, and 4.

RESULTS

From the confrontation of the perspectives of the key actors who were interviewed around the dimensions, categories, and subcategories proposed in the analysis framework, it was possible to identify when and how the open government principles are being incorporated into the phases of the policy cycles of Open Innovation Lab (MobiLab+), Municipal Plan for Early Childhood (PMPI), and Urban Operations Program (POU) of the São Paulo City Hall, as described below.

Transparency dimension

According to the interviewees' statements, in none of the three analyzed policies was transparency incorporated in all five phases of the policy cycle. In PMPI, transparency was only incorporated in the formulation phase; in MobiLab+, it was partially practiced in the agenda-setting, formulation, and implementation phases; and in POU, more intensely in the agenda-setting and decision-making phases. Some interviewees pointed out that information on some phases of the policy cycle is not as readily available as on others, and that more transparency is needed: "At some stages of the policy cycle, I think it becomes a little more difficult to see the transparency issue" (Interviewee 18, translated); "I think that we do indeed need to provide more transparency" (Interviewee 13, translated). The fact that transparency was not properly incorporated into the analyzed units is a limiting factor in terms of openness since, under the open government perspective, transparency is a value that must be present in all phases of the public policy cycle (Ball, 2009; Ramírez-Alujas, 2012).

Regarding the types of transparency, according to the interviewees' reports, the transparency practiced in the three policies presents some commonalities.

The first corresponds to direct transparency, which is associated with activities or results that are directly observable by the public; and indirect transparency, which is related to information that is verifiable only by a more restricted audience, such as inspection agents or technical specialists (Hood, 2007). In the case of MobiLab+, transparency is

direct concerning the availability of information about its operations. In the PMPI, it is direct only regarding the publication of indicators. In the POU, it is direct concerning the information on program-related actions and decisions that are accessible to stakeholders. However, indirect transparency is also practiced in MobiLab+, concerning financial data, and in PMPI, about managerial data.

The second commonality is that the three policies contemplate passive transparency, that is, they grant access to information and official documents to any citizen who requires them, except for information considered confidential by law (Zuccolotto, Teixeira, & Riccio, 2015). The PMPI and the POU also practice active transparency, periodically publishing, without the need for any request, information about their activities and documents of general interest. As reported, despite using social media to disseminate relevant information, MobiLab+ does not have an active transparency channel and does not even have a place on São Paulo City Hall's transparency portal. This is an issue that deserves attention because practicing only passive transparency does not meet what is expected of an open government, as it tends to be atomized and individualized. Active transparency should be prioritized to make available as much information of general interest as possible, and passive transparency should be used to provide access to more specific or detailed information that has not been made available through active transparency channels (Figueiredo & Gazoni, 2016).

The third commonality concerns the practice of effective and nominal transparency. According to Heald (2003), effective transparency is one in which society can access, understand, and use the information to hold public agents accountable. On the other hand, nominal transparency aims to make the government's image acceptable or sympathetic to public opinion by fulfilling the requirements of many transparency indices through the publication of large volumes of data without revealing how institutions behave in practice, in terms either of how they make decisions or the results of their actions (Fox, 2007). This is the perversion of the transparency principle (Fox, 2007). This is the perversion of the transparency principle (Heald, 2006). According to the interviewees' reports, the three policies practice effective transparency. However, in part, MobiLab+ has also practiced nominal transparency, since information about its medium and long-term plans, as well as some information about its finances, are kept confidential. When asked what kind of information is kept confidential at MobiLab+, one of the interviewees answered: "I think maybe a little more of that strategic information and more medium- and long-term planning. Maybe a little bit of the day-to-day financials" (Interviewee 4, translated). For a policy to be considered open, there must be effective transparency, as it is necessary to effectively break secrecy (Michener & Bersch, 2013).

The fourth and final commonality refers to the timing of transparency. In all three policies, there is a predominance of transparency in retrospect, that is, there is little availability of data in real time. Transparency in retrospect means that information about the organization is made available ex-post, after a needed period for publication (Heald, 2012). This period can be positive, in the sense of making it possible to structure the information to facilitate its understanding, and negative, since the information can be subject to interference (manipulation) that compromises its reliability. In cases where the period is too long or there are delays in publishing the information, this can make any type of intervention unfeasible. From another perspective, transparency in real time is one in which information is published as it is created, continuously. While transparency in retrospect is important in the sense of enabling the evaluation of past actions, in an open government it is essential to have real-time transparency or as close to it as possible, because the public needs to have access to timely information about government activities before the decision-making process begins (Vaughn, 2014).

As related to the nature of transparency, the three policies examined displayed normative transparency in terms of compliance with legal requirements, to avoid questions about the fairness of the processes. However, MobiLab+ and POU also showed characteristics of instrumental transparency in the sense of contributing to greater efficiency and efficacy. As reported, in the PMPI transparency is limited to the normative nature: "I think that, well, we are concerned with making transparent what we should make transparent, right? … Now, I think transparency is more in this form of rendering accounts" (Interviewee 13, translated). Normative transparency alone is not enough from the open government view since, in addition to complying with the rules, transparency must be an instrument to effectively contribute to preventing corruption and increasing legitimacy (Dror, 1999; Fisher, 2014; Heald, 2006).

Concerning the transparency perspective, the three policies focus more on providing institutional and operational information. In PMPI and POU, there is also the disclosure of fiscal information, which does not occur in MobiLab+. In none of them transparency occurs from the political and procedural perspectives. However, an open public policy must contemplate all these perspectives. It is necessary to make available a set of information about what the government is doing, how, when, and why it is doing it, as well as the policies' performance in fulfilling its objectives (Cucciniello, Porumbescu, & Grimmelikhuijsen, 2017).

Regarding the determinants of transparency, it is unanimous among the interviewees that all policies should be improved in terms of comprehensibility. In addition, there are some limitations in terms of the publicity and usefulness of the information in the PMPI and POU. This was evident in one of the reports: "As for the qualification of the information, we are going through a phase of improvement, right? … They are there, but the level of updating or readability is another thing. … But we need to modernize the way they are publicized" (Interviewee 18, translated). It is worth noting here that, in the open government context, besides the information having to be published in accessible formats and language, it must also be complete, comprehensible, and useful (Platt Neto, Cruz, Ensslin, & Ensslin, 2007).

Relating to transparency mechanisms, in all three policies, to a greater or lesser extent, online channels are used, such as websites, social media, Electronic Information System (SEI), and Electronic Information System for Citizens (e-SIC), among others. In most cases, the information is incomplete and dispersed across different information channels. The POU is the only policy in which print media, such as local and mass-circulation newspapers, is used to disseminate information to the public. In the cases of MobiLab+ and PMPI, reports revealed that the only transparency mechanism available to citizens who do not have digital access would be passive transparency, upon written request. This is at odds with what is expected of an open government, as issues such as availability, flow, accessibility, quantity, quality, comprehensiveness, relevance, and reliability of information must be considered by the government (Cucciniello et al., 2017).

About the open data, according to the reports, only in the POU are data sets available in an open format, that is, data in different formats, including machine-processable ones, without any restrictions on use and distribution (Attard, Orlandi, Scerri, & Auer, 2015). Nevertheless, the volume of open data available in the POU is small, and some datasets are outdated and/or without information about the date of creation or update. In the case of MobiLab+, the interviewees themselves explained that, although it is largely responsible for enabling the opening of urban mobility data in São Paulo, the information on the policy itself is not yet in an open format. In an open government, in addition to information having to be published in an adequate quantity and quality so that citizens can examine government actions and decisions, it must also meet the open data criteria (Attard et al., 2015; Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2016; Veljković et al., 2014).

Concerning the implications of transparency, it is possible to affirm that social control, accountability, and public integrity are directly affected by the way transparency is practiced within the analyzed policies. The fact that there is not a greater effort in the availability of useful, timely, accessible, understandable, and open-format information compromises citizens' access to the political arena and hinders the accountability of public agents for political actions and decisions (Fox, 2007; Huberts, 2018; Serra & Carneiro, 2012). In PMPI and POU, social control is exercised only by an evaluation commission and a management council, and both are not parity. Despite this, these two policies have taken an important step toward public integrity. The Municipal Secretariat of Government, which is responsible for the PMPI, and the Municipal Secretariat of Urban Development, to which SP Urbanismo and POU are linked, joined the Integrity and Good Practices Program promoted by the São Paulo Office of the Municipal Comptroller General (CGM). In this program, CGM is responsible for training, guiding, and monitoring the integrity plans of each of these agencies, which should promote transparency and ethics in the conduct of public agents, and implement accountability processes, among others. The effectiveness of this program can thus bring advances to the open government initiative, especially concerning active and passive transparency, accountability, and public integrity.

Participation dimension

In the three policies analyzed, citizen participation is quite limited, occurring mainly in the formulation phase of the policy cycle. As reported, only in MobiLab+ participation also occurs in the agenda-setting phase, but only partially. Dagnino (2004) draws attention to this type of situation in which most of the spaces open to participation in the discussion of public policies are restricted until the formulation phase, with no sharing of decision-making power in the other phases. This represents a barrier to the opening of the policy in terms of citizen participation.

As for the types, according to the interviewees, in the few moments when participation is allowed, it oscillates between active and passive, direct and indirect, real and symbolic, depending on the participation mechanism used. In POU, for example, participation can be classified as direct in public consultations, as there is no mediation between citizens and public agents; and indirect in the management councils, as it is a representation system in which citizens, in general, do not interact directly with government actors. In the management councils in which the seats reserved for civil society were occupied by citizens appointed by the government, participation can also be classified as symbolic, because if citizens were not even able to elect their representatives, there is a risk that participation is not real. In MobiLab+, participation can be considered active concerning promoted events, but passive in other lab activities. In PMPI, citizen participation is predominantly

symbolic. According to reports, the municipal government itself had no interest in allowing real participation that would effectively influence the course of policy: "The City Hall sought to legitimize this process with, let's say, reinforcement or recognition or a 'light' participation, right? A group that would not create problems and would not deeply discuss issues, principles, and values" (Interviewee 22, translated). The interviewees' reports show that citizen participation falls short of what is expected of an open government in the three policies analyzed. There needs to be active, direct, and real participation in which citizens can effectively influence political decisions and not just be held in the illusion that they exercise power (Avritzer, 2012; Bordenave, 1986).

Regarding the determinants of participation, the three policies analyzed presented insufficient elements from the standpoint of open government. According to the reports, whereas PMPI did not set representativeness criteria, MobiLab+ and POU limited it, since participation was restricted to some specific groups. The independence criterion is also not fully contemplated by the policies because, in some spaces, participation occurs only by citizens designated by the municipal government, which makes it difficult to know how independent they are. Concerning the information criterion, the participants usually have access to some documents during the discussion moments. But, as it was possible to perceive from the reports, the information is usually incomplete, and the participants have a short time to analyze it before expressing themselves. About the capacity criterion, only POU occasionally promotes some capacity-building actions about issues related to urban operations. In the other analyzed policies, no actions are taken to develop citizens' capabilities so that they can participate in the decision-making processes. However, SAGA and CGM promote a program called *Agentes de Governo Aberto* (Open Government Agents), which aims to offer free capacity-building services in all regions of São Paulo for citizens and public agents through thematic workshops related to transparency, innovation, social participation, and integrity. As for the involvement criterion, due to the short time frame in which participatory activities have taken place, the number of participants is generally low. With regard to influence criterion, in the three policies analyzed, the participants have little or no power to influence policy-related decisions. Through the reports, it became evident that the opinions of citizens who are present in participatory activities are not always incorporated into political decisions: "What came out of the seminar and was included in the final document is very little, right? … Because other issues had no space to be included. You see, there are channels of participation… Obviously, they are controlled channels" (Interviewee 22, translated). The frequency and permanence criteria were also not fully contemplated in the three policies' participatory activities. In most of them, participation occurs in isolated moments. Only in the POU is the situation different, as the citizens who are members of the management councils participate in frequent meetings and serve a two-year term, which is reasonable as to what is expected in terms of frequency and permanence as classified by Rowe and Frewer (2000) and Hassenforder et al. (2015).

With respect to participation mechanisms, consultations and public hearings were held in the three policies. These mechanisms are adequate, but their effectiveness depends on the way they are used and on the government's position toward citizen participation.

The participation level practiced in the analyzed policies is predominantly the consultation level, that is, citizens are consulted at some moments, although the decision-making power is always reserved for the government. This is the lowest level of participation acceptable in the open government context, as long as the consultation generates a real impact on the decision-making process, which does not seem to be the case with them.

About the implications of participation, how citizen participation has been conducted in the policies analyzed contributes little to the strengthening of citizenship, deliberative democracy, and legitimacy. As reported, in the few existing participation spaces, citizens find it difficult to take part. At the same time, the government demonstrates it is not open to broad and effective citizen participation in the policy cycle. To advance in this direction, it is necessary to guarantee the incorporation of groups with different social interests and cultural values, allowing citizens the chance to influence government actions and decisions, making them more legitimate (Chang & Jacobson, 2010; Häikiö, 2012).

Collaboration dimension

As it was possible to verify from the interviews, collaboration has been incorporated into the analyzed policies at different moments. In MobiLab+, collaboration is more focused on the agenda-setting, formulation, and implementation phases. In PMPI, in the formulation and implementation phases. In POU, more intensely in the implementation phase. In none of the policies was collaboration incorporated in the decision-making and evaluation phases. However, in all of them, there is collaboration in the implementation phase. Although some authors such as Vangen, Hayes and Cornforth (2015) have identified that collaboration is usually more intense in the implementation phase, in the context of open government, when a public policy demands a collaborative effort between government and other governmental and/or non-governmental actors, it should ideally be incorporated in all phases of the policy cycle.

As related to the mode of collaboration, in the three analyzed policies, resource-based collaboration, mainly technical knowledge, is predominant. This is a mode of collaboration that is compatible with the open government because it occurs as long as common goals among actors can be achieved through collaborative practices that integrate resources and knowledge(Aubouin & Capdevila, 2019).

Concerning the determinants of collaboration, according to the reports, the actors who worked in collaboration on the three policies demonstrated a good capacity for joint action, as well as the sharing of knowledge and other resources, such as physical space and equipment. Only in the POU was it reported that there is difficulty in joint actions in intergovernmental relations: "I see that this alignment [with intragovernmental actors] is very difficult. I think it's very complicated. … I think it's difficult and there is a lot of resistance, it's not a fluid thing" (Interviewee 23, translated). This is an obstacle to opening up the policy in terms of collaboration because the capacity for the joint action is the functional dimension of the collaborative dynamic (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015). It is necessary that the actors involved in collaborative efforts can work toward the achievement of collective objectives and that tensions are treated in a balanced way, mitigating disputes and conflicts between the actors (Thomson & Perry, 2006). Regarding the leadership of collaborative activities, it has been exercised by the policy managers themselves. According to the interviewees, these leaders showed a good ability to manage conflicts. However, it was possible to observe that the sharing of responsibilities is not yet a consolidated issue by the actors involved in the policies, with an imbalance of power between governmental and non-governmental actors. As a consequence, there is a risk that collaboration can be used by the government as a cosmetic to legitimize decisions that, perhaps, were already taken unilaterally.

About the mechanisms of collaboration used in the analyzed policies, covenants, cooperation agreements, and multilateral partnerships with companies, startups, and civil society organizations stand out. These mechanisms are compatible with open government as long as they enable the collective construction of solutions and the sharing of resources to increase government efficiency and efficacy (Lee & Kwak, 2011).

With respect to levels of collaboration practiced in MobiLab+, PMPI, and POU, the coordination level predominates, which is the lowest level expected from an open government regarding collaboration, according to the scales proposed by Thompson and Sanders (1998) and Selden et al. (2006). Even so, the ideal is to seek higher levels of collaboration whenever possible and as long as this can generate benefits of public interest (Vigoda & Gilboa, 2002).

Relative to the implications of collaboration, it is unanimous among the interviewees that collaborative activities have produced positive outcomes in the production of public goods and services in the three analyzed policies. However, except for MobiLab+, the collaboration did little to generate open innovation. The collaborative activities in MobiLab+ have generated innovative, award-winning solutions to urban mobility problems, such as bus location applications, for example. Nevertheless, some reports suggest that more recent collaborative activities have contributed little to generating public value: "In MobiLab+, startups kind of took over the space, like this… Less public interest, less 'let's solve problems,' less civil society, and more startups, gains in scale, and making money" (Interviewee 6, translated). This type of situation was addressed by Sullivan e Skelcher (2002), who consider that there is an inherent difficulty in collaboration between the government, which is oriented toward the public interest, and companies, which are oriented toward the private interest. In this sense, the authors emphasize that the focus of collaboration between public and private organizations should be on issues related to public policies, as their purpose is to add value to public sector activities and not to overlap public interests with private ones. Therefore, as emphasized by Sørensen and Torfing (2011), it is necessary to create more open and flexible interaction arenas between government, the private sector, and civil society, so that these actors can co-produce, co-create, and generate innovation to achieve the best solutions and thus generate public value for society.

CONCLUSION

The present study aimed to identify when and how open government principles are being incorporated into the phases of the public policy cycle in local governments.

Regarding the moment when the open government principles are being incorporated, it was possible to observe that in none of the analyzed policies was there full incorporation of these principles in the five phases of the policy cycle. Transparency is most concentrated in the agenda-setting and formulation phases, citizen participation occurs most often in the formulation phase, and collaboration is most intense in the formulation and implementation phases.

With respect to how the open government principles are being incorporated, this study found that the analyzed policies have not made much progress in the necessary requirements for them to be considered open policies. Although MobiLab+ and PMPI are pointed out by the

interviewees as good examples of collaboration between the municipal government and other governmental and non-governmental actors, both are quite limited in terms of transparency and participation. Similarly, while the POU has good platforms for participation and transparency, the program faces difficulties in intragovernmental collaboration. When it comes to transparency, further progress is needed in terms of publicity, accessibility, comprehensibility, and openness of data to enable social control, accountability, and guarantee public integrity. Relating to participation, issues such as the low level of influence on decisions and the lack of representativeness criteria and mechanisms that guarantee its effectiveness must be overcome to contribute to the strengthening of citizenship, deliberative democracy, and the legitimacy of the decision-making process. The collaboration, although having presented good outcomes in the production of public goods and services, still needs to advance in terms of open innovation and public value.

Despite the theoretical and methodological rigor employed in this study, some limitations should be noted. The results presented were based on the analysis of the interviewed actors' reports and official documents from the São Paulo City Hall, based on previously established dimensions, categories, and subcategories. Therefore, the quality, performance, and effects of the analyzed policies, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of including new actors in the policy cycle, are beyond the scope of this research.

The theoretical-analytical framework presented offers conditions to be applied in different realities and can be used in future research to better understand how the principles of open government are being incorporated into the public policies of other local governments. Another interesting point for future research is the development of indicators that can measure the degree of government openness.

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2nd author: conceptualization (equal); formal analysis (supporting); investigation (supporting); methodology (equal); project administration (equal); supervision (lead); writing – original draft (supporting); writing – review & editing (equal).

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Data Availability

The authors claim that all data used in the research have been made publicly available through the Harvard Dataverse platform and can be accessed at:

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